

# Characteristics of Self Actualizing People

1. Realistic  
Realistically oriented, SA persons have a more efficient perception of reality, they have comfortable relations with it. This is extended to all areas of life. SA persons are unthreatened, unfrightened by the unknown. they have a superior ability to reason, to see the truth. They are logical and efficient.
2. Acceptance  
Accept themselves, others and the natural world the way they are. Sees human nature as is, have a lack of crippling guilt or shame, enjoy themselves without regret or apology, they have no unnecessary inhibitions.
3. Spontaneity, simplicity, naturalness  
Spontaneous in their inner life, thoughts and impulses, they are unhampered by convention. Their ethics is autonomous, they are individuals, and are motivated to continual growth.
4. Problem centering  
Focus on problems outside themselves, other centered. They have a mission in life requiring much energy, their mission is their reason for existence. They are serene, characterized by a lack of worry, and are devoted to duty.
5. Detachment: the need for privacy  
Alone but not lonely, unflappable, retain dignity amid confusion and personal misfortunes, objective. They are self starters, responsible for themselves, own their behavior.
6. Autonomy: Independent of culture and environment  
SA's rely on inner self for satisfaction. Stable in the face of hard knocks, they are self contained, independent from love and respect.
7. Continued freshness of appreciation  
Have a fresh rather than stereotyped appreciation of people and things. Appreciation of the basic good in life, moment to moment living is thrilling, transcending and spiritual. They live the present moment to the fullest.

8. Peak experiences

Feelings of limitless horizons opening up to the vision, the feeling of being simultaneously more powerful and also more helpless than one ever was before, the feeling of ecstasy and wonder and awe, the loss of placement in time and space with, finally, the conviction that something extremely important and valuable had happened, so that the subject was to some extent transformed and strengthened even in his daily life by such experiences. Abraham Maslow

Maslow asked his subjects to think of the most wonderful experience or experiences of their lives--the happiest moments, extatic moments, moments of rapture, perhaps from being in love, or from listening to music or suddenly "being hit" by a book or a painting or from some great creative moment. He found that people undergoing peak experiences felt more integrated, more at one with the world, more in command of their own lives, more spontaneous, less aware of space and time, more perceptive, more self determined, more playful.

EFFECTS OF PEAK EXPERIENCES:

- The removal of neurotic symptoms
- A tendency to view oneself in a more healthy way
- Change in one's view of other people and of one's relations with them
- Change in one's view of the world
- The release of creativity, spontaneity and expressiveness
- A tendency to remember the experience and to try to duplicate it
- A tendency to view life in general as more worthwhile.

9. Gemeinschaftsgefühl

Identification, sympathy, and affection for mankind, kinship with the good, the bad and the ugly, older-brother attitude. Truth is clear to him, can see things others cannot see.

10. Interpersonal relations

Profound, intimate relationships with few. Capable of greater love than others consider possible. Benevolence, affection and friendliness shown to everyone.

11. Democratic values and attitudes

Able to learn from anyone, humble. Friendly with anyone regardless of class, education, political belief, race or color.

12. Discrimination: means and ends, Good and Evil

Do not confuse between means and ends. They do not do wrong. Enjoy the here and now, getting to goal--not just the result. They make the most tedious task an enjoyable game. They have their own inner moral standards (appearing amoral to others).

13. Philosophical, unhostile sense of humor

Jokes are teaching metaphors, intrinsic to the situation, spontaneous, can laugh at themselves, never make jokes that hurt others.

14. Creativity  
Inborn uniqueness that carries over into everything they do, see the real and true more easily, original, inventive and less inhibited.
15. Resistance to enculturation: Transcendence of any particular culture  
Inner detachment from culture, folkways are used but of no consequence, calm long term culture improvement, indignation with injustice, inner autonomy and outer acceptance. Transcend the environment rather than just cope.
16. Imperfections  
Painfully aware of own imperfections, joyfully aware of own growth process. Impatient with self when stuck, real life pain, not imagined.
17. Values  
Philosophical acceptance of the nature of his self, human nature, social life, nature, physical reality, remains realistically human.
18. Resolution of dichotomies  
Polar opposites merge into a third, higher phenomenon, as though the two have united, work becomes play, most childlike person is most wise, opposite forces no longer felt as a conflict. Desires are in excellent accord with reason.

Maslow says there are two processes necessary for self-actualization: self exploration and action. The deeper the self exploration, the closer one comes to self-actualization.

## **EIGHT WAYS TO SELF ACTUALIZE**

1. Experience things fully, vividly, selflessly. Throw yourself into the experiencing of something: concentrate on it fully, let it totally absorb you.
2. Life is an ongoing process of choosing between safety (out of fear and need for defense) and risk (for the sake of progress and growth): Make the growth choice a dozen times a day.
3. Let the self emerge. Try to shut out the external clues as to what you should think, feel, say, and so on, and let your experience enable you to say what you truly feel.
4. When in doubt, be honest. If you look into yourself and are honest, you will also take responsibility. Taking responsibility is self-actualizing.
5. Listen to your own tastes. Be prepared to be unpopular.
6. Use your intelligence, work to do well the things you want to do, no matter how insignificant they seem to be.
7. Make peak experiencing more likely: get rid of illusions and false notions. Learn what you are good at and what your potentialities are not.
8. Find out who you are, what you are, what you like and don't like, what is good and what is bad for you, where you are going, what your mission is. Opening yourself up to yourself in this way means identifying defenses--and then finding the courage to give them up.